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Cooperative Program in Educational Personnel Reorganization, Utilization and Continuing Education. A Prospectus.

Niskayuna Public Schools, N.Y. Office of Research and Development.; Niskayuna Teachers Association, N.Y.
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As a result of experience with teacher aides, curriculum change, and a student independent study project based on student use of self-operated technological devices, a 4-year project in the Niskayuna, New York, schools has been planned which combines the training and continuing education of teachers (within the normal working day) and more effective use of educational personnel to produce within the school system a flexible capacity for effecting planned change. Objectives for the first year include (1) pilot programs involving differentiated staff teams; (2) a complete analysis, in cooperation with System Development Corporation, of the tasks of educational personnel (based on tasks implied within a description of the learning environment and on those identified from pilot project data); (3) definition of a series of differentiated roles (with job descriptions) from administrative to clerical levels; (4) development of a training program (primarily self-instructional materials) for each differentiated role; (5) development of a plan for initiating six to eight operational teams to test the new roles in realistic school settings; (6) specification of behavioral and attitudinal changes expected from students and staff; and (7) establishment of a continuing evaluation program. (Included are a list of needs for the program; descriptions of the project design and organizational structure; lists of activities for the second, third, and fourth years; and an estimated budget.) (JS)

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NISKAYUNA PUBLIC SCHOOLS
NISKAYUNA, NEW YORK
12309

PROSPECTUS:

COOPERATIVE PROGRAM IN EDUCATIONAL PERSONNEL REORGANIZATION, UTILIZATION AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

OFFICE OF RESEARCH
and DEVELOPMENT

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and

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PROSPECTUS SUBMITTED
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FOREWORD

The Niskayuna Schools have, since their inception, attempted to provide leadership for the profession. Fourteen years ago, when they became a central school district, they began the practice of employing teacher aides. Today, with a student population of 5,200, the aides program has grown to represent a $120,000 item in the budget. These aides provide a great variety of services, but the lack of a designed program and inadequate training of professional educators in management procedures result in many wasted man hours and ineffective use of human resources.

The Niskayuna Schools have attempted to keep informed regarding the work of national curriculum study committees and have usually tested most of the recommendations. In some cases Niskayuna has been invited to be one of the test schools for some of these programs. Few of these programs have been adopted as designed, but our own curriculum writers have incorporated much of the material and methods in the Niskayuna curriculum guides.

The significant boost to planned change came as a result of an independent study project, initiated at the High School, but designed and installed on a K-12 basis as the consequence of an ESEA Title III grant in 1966. This project was designed to teach students to accept much more responsibility for their own learning and learning activities. This project based many of the "modularized" curriculum materials on the student use of self operated technological devices. Since this project was installed, changes have occurred within the district at an accelerating pace. Teacher roles have begun to change and teacher aides have been assigned more responsible tasks in relation to the learning process.

Institutions of higher education became interested in our operation and we have designed, in cooperation with them, totally new programs for student teachers and internes. Currently, we have ongoing programs with three such institutions. Syracuse University has invited Niskayuna to be a part of the planning and operation of a program that will be a major departure from conventional teacher training programs.

A listing of these evolving programs would be too long for our purposes here, but as a result of the many changes occurring, the Board of Education created the Office of Research and Development to plan systematically for ongoing change (see Appendix #4). This office designed a systematic process to prepare for change (see Appendix #1) and has begun the installation of a Long Range Planning Council (see Appendix #2). This Council will work cooperatively with the Educational Policies Research Center at Syracuse University and the New York State Department of Education to attempt to predicate change on desirable alternative social and technological futures.

Basic to planned change in education is the training and continuing education of teachers. If this can be incorporated with a self renewing study or more effective use of educational personnel, a school system should have a flexible, ongoing capability for effecting desired changes.

It is to accomplish these ends that the Niskayuna Teachers Association and the Niskayuna Public Schools have prepared the following Project Prospectus.

1. NEEDS

The needs of this proposed Niskayuna project have been established during the four years of developing and installing the independent study project and the related activities described in the foreword. The needs stated below are the identified needs of students, staff and community.

(1) To organize a more flexible learning environment to provide unique learning experiences for each individual. Each sequence of experiences should take into account the interest areas of the learner, his learning style, his varying moods and should provide opportunities for him to evaluate his own progress.

(2) To provide a learning environment which will preserve and increase the curiosity and enthusiasm which are a natural endowment of young children.

(3) To provide greater varieties of human resources for each student as he works in the learning environment.

(4) To provide an open educational environment where involvement for improvement is continuous for all participating personnel and where machinery is in constant operation, permitting students, educational personnel, parents and community representatives to evaluate and refine this environment.

(5) To conduct a continuing analysis of the tasks and roles of the educational personnel within this environment.

(6) To reorganize the system so that the retrained personnel may perform the tasks that will create the desired learning environment.

(7) To provide a continuing educational program so that the educational personnel can improve their capacities to invent and implement new educational patterns and programs.

(8) To create an environment that will satisfy the professional needs of all educational personnel.

(9) To improve the existing linkages and establish new linkages with a variety of organizations external to the school system which can provide important resources for ongoing educational research and development.

2. OBJECTIVES

The following objectives are those which we would expect to reach during the first year of operation (1970-1971):

(1) To install, based on planning during the 1969-70 school year, two or more pilot programs involving differentiated staff teams. The experience of these teams will be used to provide data for the task analysis.

(2) To conduct, with the cooperation of the subcontractor, System Development Corporation, a complete analysis of the tasks of the educational personnel based on (a) tasks implied within the description of the learning environment provided by the Planning Council (see page 4) and (b) the tasks identified from the data collected in the pilot programs.

(3) To define a series of differentiated roles for educational personnel ranging from administrative to clerical. These roles will be developed by using project established criteria to group the tasks identified in the analysis (Objective 2). Each role, therefore, will have a specific job description based on the grouping of the identified tasks.

(4) To develop a training program for each of the differentiated roles. This program would consist primarily of self instructional materials.

(5) To develop a plan for the installation of six to eight operational teams to test the differentiated personnel roles in a realistic school setting. (These teams to be installed during the second project year 1971-72.)

(6) To specify the kind of behavioral and attitudinal changes expected from the students and staff as a result of incorporating the differentiated roles within the school environment.

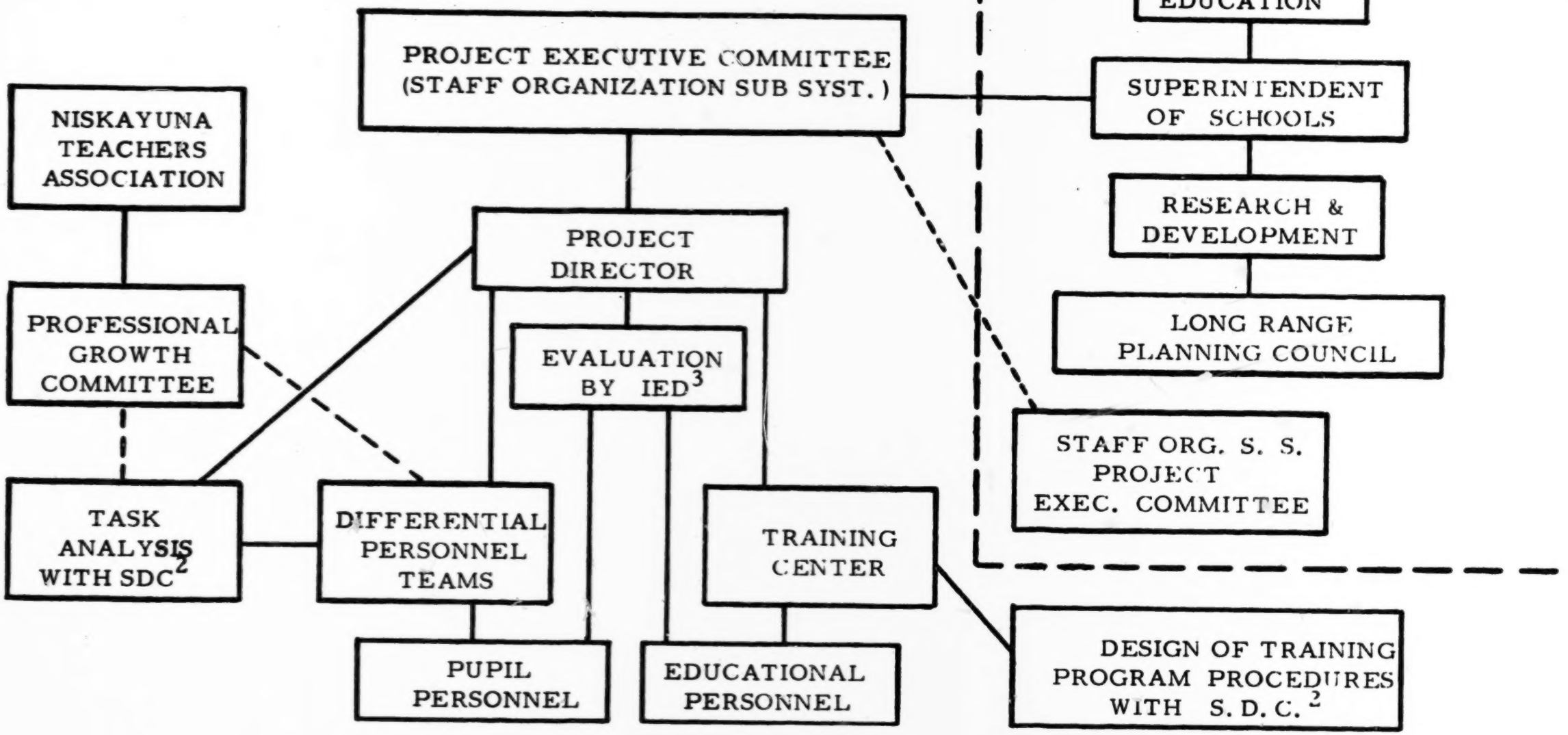
(7) To establish a continuous evaluation program, with the cooperation of the Institute for Educational Development, that will provide measurement of short range and long range changes in behaviors and attitudes of students and staff. Implied in this evaluation are the collection of base line data for later comparisons, establishment of a data bank and development of data collection instruments.

3. PROGRAM DESIGN

The Niskayuna project will start one year prior to the first possible funding under EPDA. During the 1969-70 school year, the Planning Council* will provide two basic statements to the Project Executive Committee. The first of these will be a clear statement of the goals of education for the Niskayuna students. This will not be a statement of philosophy, but primarily a statement of behavioral and process goals. The second statement will describe the kinds of learning environments that would accomplish the educational goals described. The following are typical questions that must be considered: How do we create an environment that produces self initiated and self prescribed learning? What kinds of learning environments will produce natural, life long, self educators? How can we effectively utilize the resources of the broader social environment, not just the schools? How do we organize the learning system so technological devices are teaching and informational devices in their own right, and not something used to emphasize a teacher made point? The answers to these and the other very complex questions posed in the description of needs (Page 1) will be spelled out specifically by the Planning Council. This activity will not be supported by the proposed project, but will be basic to its operation.

*See Organization Chart, Page 4

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE NISKAYUNA COOPERATIVE STAFF UTILIZATION PROJECT



1. There are currently eleven sub-systems of the planning council. (see appendix #2) The Staff Organization Sub-System will also serve as the Executive Committee of the project.

2. System Development Corporation

3. Institute for Educational Development

The Project Executive Committee will be established jointly by the Niskayuna Teachers Association and the Office of Research and Development. It will be the responsibility of this committee to approve and monitor all experiments in the district dealing with Differentiated Staffing or Staff Utilization, and specifically, it will be the policy making agency for the proposed project.

The membership of this committee will be as follows:

3 Teachers (selected by the Teachers Association)

2 Students (selected by the Student Council)

1 Administrator (selected by the Administrative Council)

1 Community Representative (selected by the parents organization)

1 Representative of Higher Education

2 Representatives from Project subcontractors.

In addition, the Director of Research and Development and the presidents of the Niskayuna Board of Education and Teachers Association will serve as ex-officio members. The Director of Research and Development will serve as project director until a director is selected by the Executive Committee and assumes project responsibility. At that time the Director of Research and Development will assume an advisory role.

The Project Executive Committee will establish project policies and be the responsible agency for the project. In addition, this committee will function as the Staff Organization Sub-System to the Long Range Planning Council.

During the year prior to possible funding (1969-70), the Project Executive Committee will invite teams of teachers to design and submit plans for pilot installation of differentiated staffing experiements. (This will be done in cooperation with the Niskayuna Teachers Association whose Professional Growth Committee has already begun a major educational and consultative effort in the area of differential staffing.)

The teams selected will be installed and used as sources of data for the task analysis and for other purposes during the first year of project funding. In the spring of 1970, two or more of the teams submitting plans will be selected, and concentrated planning will start so they may be implemented in September of 1970 (Objective 1). During the summer of 1970 appropriate curriculum materials will be prepared, and organizational planning will be refined. As the project goes into operation in 1970-71, the educational personnel in these teams and personnel supporting the operation will be available to work with the System Development Corporation in the task analysis.

For the task analysis (Objective 2), one of the most important activities in the entire project, we shall use the theoretical design of the learning environment produced by the Planning Council and data collected from the two or more experimental designs used by the pilot teams. In cooperation with System Development Corporation, we shall undertake a description of all of the identifiable tasks which must be performed by personnel in the learning environment. This will include support personnel as well as those in direct contact with students. At the completion of this undertaking, we shall have a list and description of many non-classified tasks.

The second phase of this effort will be to establish criteria for the classification of the identified tasks. These criteria will be based on indicators such as educational attainment, experience, success, psychological understandings, knowledge, etc. Once the criteria are established the unclassified tasks will be grouped according to specific personnel roles (Objective 3). This grouping of tasks and task definitions into personnel roles, in effect, will create a series of specific job descriptions, the basis for a series of personnel training manuals.

As this systematically designed series of roles takes shape, the pilot differentiated teams, used as data sources for the task analysis, may be revised to test the operational feasibility of the new role definitions.

The next sequence of activities is the selection, design and development of training materials based on specific job descriptions. With personnel roles systematically analysed and described, the accurate design of training materials becomes an easier task. Training objectives may be easily described in behavioral terms because the specific role tasks have previously been identified. Training materials will also be developed for continuing professional growth and development. For example, some members of a team working with young children must be knowledgeable about theories of learning as well as learning behaviors of children. Training programs therefore must be developed for these areas of competence. To develop these materials we have requested budget funds for short term resident specialists.

Training materials will be designed so they may be used by educational personnel in ways identical to those we are developing for Niskayuna students. Materials will be housed in a training center and will be primarily self-instructional. Anyone who desires upward mobility or self improvement may develop, or receive help to develop, an individualized program for self study. The achievement of a series of prescribed role objectives will qualify the learner for employment in that personnel role. If the learner needs assistance in the achievement of objectives, the necessary human resources will be available from his team and from the training center. This type of training materials organization and resource availability should permit and encourage self improvement and mobility within the differentiated staffing pattern.

The final activity for this first project year will be in the identification of schools and grade levels where operational testing of the new personnel roles will take place during the second project year (Objective 5). Once this identification is completed, personnel will be selected for the teams, and organizational procedures

will be developed.

This concludes the Prospectus for the first year, with the exception of the continuous evaluation program (Objectives 6 and 7) which will be developed and implemented in cooperation with the Institute for Educational Development.

The following should provide general understanding of the second, third and fourth years of proposed development:

Second Year

A. Employ project team personnel for one month in the summer for training and planning.

B. Teams become operational in September to test differentiated personnel and supporting training programs. (Application of Objective 5.) Team members in this kind of a learning environment may leave the teams for training and retraining during working hours. It is not necessary for a district, after materials have been developed and tested, to conduct after school or vacation time inservice education. This is also true for team tasks such as curriculum materials design and development. It is imperative that this flexibility be achieved.

C. Evaluate and refine task assignments and definitions, roles, organizational plans and training materials.

D. Continue to develop new training materials. (During this year simulation exercises will be developed as a part of the training program.)

E. Organize the major part of the district staff in operational teams for the next project year.

F. Select a school district near Niskayuna that would like to develop similar staff utilization and training programs and begin preparation for a test installation.

G. Initiate development of program manual to be available to other school districts interested in differential staffing and training.

H. Develop appropriate dissemination and visitor information programs.

Third Year

A. Extensive summer program for operational teams; training, organizing and planning.

B. Further development and refinement of program and training materials.

C. Niskayuna team and SDC work cooperatively with external district to install differential staffing and training program.

D. Select second external district outside of region that will provide different characteristics for further replicability testing.

E. Continue development of program manual and dissemination techniques.

Fourth Year

A. Continue to expand Niskayuna installation. (Program should now be district supported operationally; evaluation and replicability testing should be project supported.)

B. Continue to help with operational program in local external district.

C. Begin cooperative installation in remote external district.

D. Complete program manual.

SPECIAL NOTE

We should like to emphasize three points covered in this prospectus which deserve special highlighting: (1) Teaching with technological devices has become common in the learning program of students in the Niskayuna Schools. Similar techniques involving advanced technological methods for individualizing instruction will be utilized with the continuing education program for educational personnel. (2) The design of the program is such that all educational personnel may be constantly renewing or upgrading skills <u>within</u> the normal working day. This

point is critical to continuation of the program after funding and especially critical to adoption of the program by other school districts. We have found that in our experimental efforts with these teams, if one member is ill for only a few days, the other members of the team would prefer to conduct the operation without a substitute. The operation does not noticeably change with a team member out for these short periods. This experience indicates to us that there is sufficient time and flexibility in the program for teachers to create new materials, upgrade their knowledge and performance and work with individual students, without increasing the time they must devote to the work day. (3) The long term success of the differentiated staffing and training programs depends on the capacity of the system to:

(a) successfully integrate all of its planning activities;

(b) constantly appraise and define changes within society which affect the educational process.

This capability is provided for in Niskayuna by the Long Range Planning Council, the Office of Research and Development, and fundamentally the involvement of the educational personnel of the district.

4. STAFF RESOURCES

At the present time the Niskayuna Schools do not have staff members assigned to staff trainer roles. When the project is funded, applications for the training positions will be invited from internal and external sources.

5. EVALUATION

The evaluation of the project including its planning, operational procedures and problems as well as the behavioral and attitudinal changes of students and educational personnel is being designed and carried out by the Institute of Educational Development. The design of the evaluation cannot be included at this time because it will be constructed during the detailed planning prior to the November 1 submittal.

6. ESTIMATED BUDGET

	Direct Costs
Professional Salaries	$ 66,000.00
Para-professional Salaries	14,000.00
Secretarial Salaries	8,000.00
Resident Specialists	18,000.00
Fixed Costs	20,000.00
Total Estimated Personnel Costs	$ 126,000.00
Training Materials and Supplies	$ 30,000.00
Consultants	4,000.00
Consultant Travel	4,000.00
Staff Travel	5,000.00
Office Supplies, Material and Cost	2,500.00
Total Estimated Operational Costs	$ 45,500.00
Subcontractors	
System Development Corporation	$ 60,000.00
Institute for Educational Development	25,000.00
Total Estimated Subcontracting	$ 85,000.00
Indirect Costs	
	$ 10,000.00
Total Estimated Budget	$ 266,500.00